

Thrilling  
Western  
Adventures

with

**KIT WEST**

and  
the

**PRINCE OF  
PIONEERS**

ANC



AN *Avon* COMIC

NO. 5



# COW PUNCHER







WEB COMIC  
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# The **FLAMING FINGERS** OF DEATH



A STEALTHY HAND SENDS THE QUIET FOREST INTO A BLAZING INFERNO OF BURNING DEATH...A BEAUTIFUL GIRL IS LEFT THERE TO PERISH AMID THE LEAPING FLAMES. WHY...? IT'S A PUZZLE THAT, WERE IT NOT FOR THE TEXAS RANGER, MAY WELL HAVE GONE UNSOLVED, AND WITH IT, A KILLER WOULD HAVE BEEN LEFT FREE TO TAKE HIS PLACE AMONG HONEST MEN! BUT THE TEXAS RANGER, SYMBOL OF JUSTICE AND HONOR IN THE OLD WEST, UNRAVELS THE PUZZLE THAT BEGAN IN THE FLAMING FOREST WHEN HE FOUGHT THE **FLAMING FINGERS OF DEATH!!!**



ONE AFTERNOON, THE TEXAS RANGER IS PEACEFULLY RIDING THROUGH THE FOREST, WHEN....



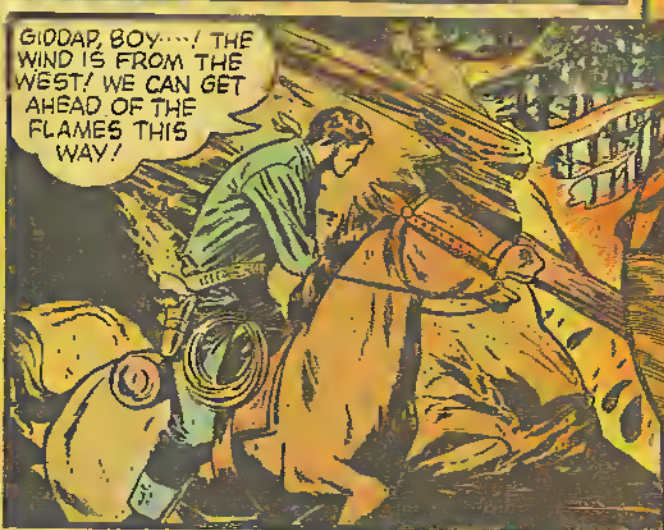
EASY, BOY...  
MAYBE...SAY,  
WAIT A  
MINUTE!  
I SMELL  
SMOKE!

GREAT SHOOTIN'---!  
IT'S A FOREST FIRE! AND  
IT'S COMING FAST, TOO!  
I'D BETTER GET TO  
TOWN AND WARN  
EVERYONE!



WHOA----/  
THAT HORSE---  
THE RIDER IS  
MISSING!

GIDDAP, BOY---! THE  
WIND IS FROM THE  
WEST! WE CAN GET  
AHEAD OF THE  
FLAMES THIS  
WAY!



THE RIDER OF THAT  
HORSE MAY BE BACK  
IN THOSE FLAMES!  
C'MON, BOY,  
LET'S GO!



RACING BACK INTO THE BURNING FOREST, THE  
TEXAS RANGER SUDDENLY FINDS AN INERT FORM....

WHOA, BOY--!  
JUMPIN'  
LIZARDS--!  
IT'S A  
GIRL! WE'RE  
JUST IN  
TIME!





SHE'LL BE BADLY  
BURNED IN A SECOND!  
GOOD---- SHE'S  
WAKING UP!

OOOHH-----  
MY HEAD!

OH.../ WH...  
WHAT HAS  
HAPPENED?

YOU WERE ON FIRE!  
C'MON....WE'VE GOT  
TO GET OUT OF HERE!  
WERE IN THE MIDDLE  
OF A RAGING  
FIRE!



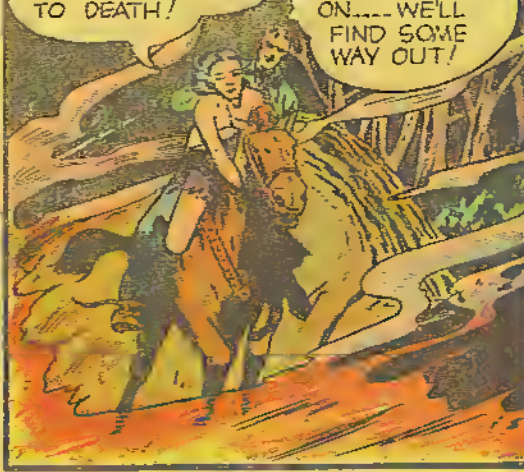
HOW CAN WE  
GET OUT? THE  
FIRE IS ALL  
AROUND  
US!

WE'RE HEEMED IN FROM  
ALL SIDES NOW! MIGHTY  
STRANGE TO HAVE  
SPREAD IN ALL  
DIRECTIONS SO  
FAST!

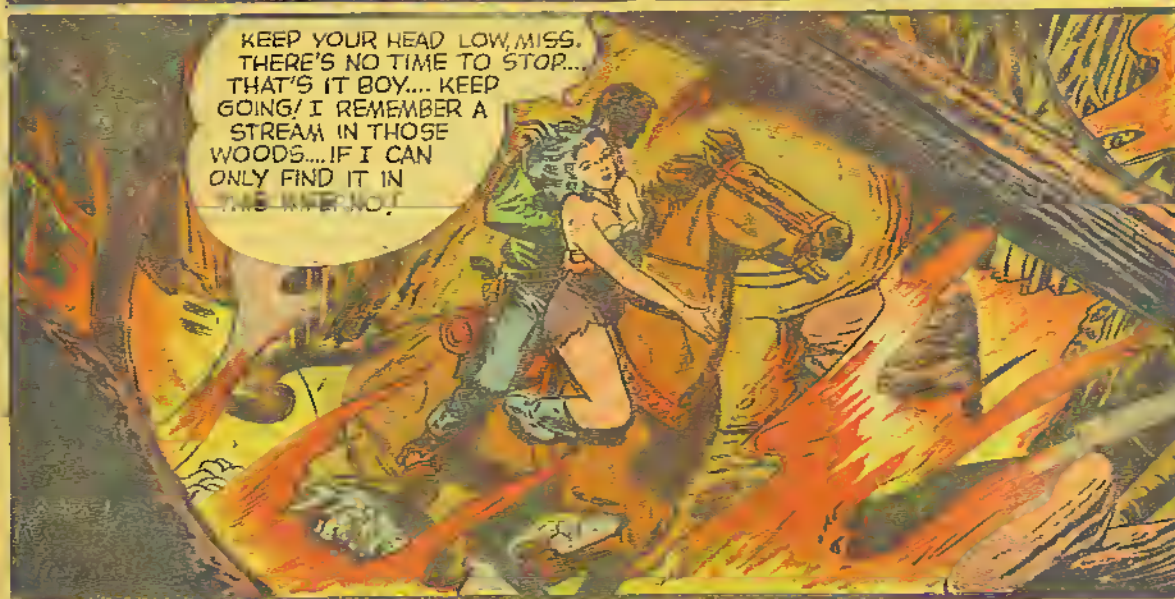


WE'RE **TRAPPED**....  
WE'LL BE BURNED  
TO DEATH!

NOT IF I CAN  
HELP IT! HANG  
ON.... WE'LL  
FIND SOME  
WAY OUT!



KEEP YOUR HEAD LOW, MISS.  
THERE'S NO TIME TO STOP...  
THAT'S IT BOY.... KEEP  
GOING! I REMEMBER A  
STREAM IN THOSE  
WOODS....IF I CAN  
ONLY FIND IT IN  
THE DARK, NO!







THERE IT IS....

I HOPE IT WILL SAVE US....



OH... IT STOPS THE FLAMES... HOLDS THEM OFF!

RIGHT, AND IT LEADS OUT OF THE FOREST!

AND SOON, RIDING THE STREAM, THE RANGER EMERGES FROM THE FIERY FOREST....

WE MADE IT... WERE OUT! RANGER... I'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO REPAY YOU FOR SAVING MY LIFE!

THAT'S ALL RIGHT, MISS... ER... GOLLY... I DON'T KNOW YOUR NAME!



MY NAME IS CORA CARTER!

CORA CARTER! WHY... YOU'RE THE SINGER AT THE TEN-GALLON HOTEL IN TOWN. WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU IN THE WOODS---- YOUR HORSE THROW YOU?

NO... I'D DISMOUNTED TO REST AWHILE WHEN SOMEONE STRUCK ME FROM BEHIND, AND KNOCKED ME OUT! I'D HAVE DIED IN THAT FIRE IF YOU HADN'T COME ALONG!



YOU WERE HIT FROM BEHIND? HMMM... AND THAT FIRE WAS STARTED BY SOMEBODY ON PURPOSE. THERE WAS JUST A MILD WEST WIND WHEN I FIRST BECAME AWARE OF IT!





THEN SUDDENLY, THE FIRE HEMMED US IN FROM ALL SIDES. A WIND BLOWING FROM ONE DIRECTION WOULDN'T HAVE DONE IT SO QUICKLY. IT WAS SET IN FOUR DIFFERENT SPOTS SO IT'D SPREAD FAST!



BUT WHY SHOULD ANYONE WANT TO KILL ME....? WHY....WHY....?

SOMEBODY MEANT TO KILL YOU AND MAKE IT SEEM AS IF YOU'D DIED IN THE FIRE! MAYBE I CAN FIND OUT WHO AND WHY!



AS FAR AS THE MURDERER KNOWS, YOU'RE DEAD. I'LL GO TO TOWN AND SEE IF I CAN PICK UP A LEAD. MEANWHILE I'LL HIDE YOU IN A RANGER WAY-STATION, NEAR HERE!



NEXT DAY, IN TOWN, THE RANGER BEGINS PUTTING HIS PLAN INTO EFFECT.

YES, RANGER, I'M HAL CREEGER, MANAGER HERE. WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU?

I'VE BAD NEWS, YOUR SINGER, CORA CARTER, WAS TRAPPED IN A BAD FOREST FIRE. I FOUND HER BODY!



WHAT...??? POOR CORA. THIS IS REALLY A SHOCK!

I KNOW HOW YOU MUST FEEL. IT LOOKS AS IF YOU'LL HAVE TO GET SOMEONE TO REPLACE HER. LET ME KNOW IF I CAN HELP!



AND STILL LATER...

SO FAR SO GOOD...I'VE SPREAD IT ALL OVER TOWN. NOW TO WAIT AND WATCH CLOSELY. SOONER OR LATER THE MAN I WANT WILL





SUDDENLY...  
HARDON ME,  
MA'M... I WASN'T  
WATCHING,  
RECKIN' I WAS  
THINKIN' HARD!

THAT'S ALL RIGHT,  
RANGER. SAY, IF  
YOU'RE GOING TO BE  
IN TOWN TONIGHT,  
YOU MUST COME  
LISTEN TO ME, I'M  
THE NEW SINGER  
CREEGAR HIRED!

I SURE  
WILL BE  
THERE,  
LISTENING,  
MA'M.

GOOD...! I'M GOING  
TO NAP TILL TONIGHT.  
I'M DEAD TIRED. IT  
TOOK ME ALL DAY  
YESTERDAY TO LEARN  
THE SONGS HE WANTS  
ME TO SING TO-  
NIGHT!

IT TOOK HER ALL DAY  
YESTERDAY TO LEARN  
THOSE SONGS? THEN  
CREEGAR HIRED HER, TOLD  
HER WHAT TO SING---  
YESTER-  
DAY!

THAT MEANS JUST ONE THING...  
CREEGAR KNEW YESTERDAY HE'D NEED  
TO REPLACE CORA---- BECAUSE HE  
PLANNED TO  
GET RID  
OF HER!

THAT DOES IT.... CREEGAR'S MY MAN!  
I STILL DON'T KNOW WHY HE  
TRIED TO KILL CORA BUT I'LL  
KNOW THAT TONIGHT!

LATER THAT NIGHT...  
READY... THERE HE IS. HE'S IN FOR  
A LITTLE SURPRISE! LET'S GO!!!!

AS YOU FOLKS  
KNOW, CORA CARTER  
DIED IN THAT FOREST  
FIRE --- A REAL  
TRAGEDY. HOWEVER,  
I'VE ANOTHER---

THAT'S ALL, CREEGAR....  
I'VE A LITTLE SUR-  
PRISE FOR YOU!

WHA---?? IT'S  
HER--- SHE'S ALIVE!



I'M TAKING YOU IN FOR ATTEMPTED MURDER, CREEGAR! YOU TIPPED YOUR HAND WHEN YOU HIRED CORA'S REPLACEMENT YESTERDAY!

YOU'RE NOT TAKIN' ME ANYPLACE, RANGER....!



I'LL TEACH YOU TO STICK YOUR NOSE INTO MY BUSINESS!



YOU WANT TO PLAY ROUGH, EH! ANYTHING YOU SAY, CREEGAR.



I'M GOIN' TO FINISH WHAT I STARTED!

GUN PLAY, TOO....! IF THAT'S THE WAY YOU WANT IT, YOU'LL GET IT!



MUSN'T PLAY WITH GUNS....!

Oooh.... MY HAND!



YOU OUGHT TO KNOW BETTER THAN TO DRAW AGAINST A RANGER!





NO....P...PLEASE  
DON'T HIT ME  
AGAIN....  
DON'T!

IT LOOKS LIKE  
YOU'VE HAD ENOUGH,  
YOU VARMINT!

MAKE HIM TELL WHY  
HE TRIED TO KILL  
ME, RANGER. WE  
STILL DON'T  
KNOW THAT!

YOU HEARD HER,  
CREEGAR.... START  
TALKING, FAST!

YES, YES.... I'LL TELL HER  
DRESSING ROOM IS RIGHT NEXT TO MY OFFICE.  
THE OTHER NIGHT, LATE, I WAS  
PAYING OFF A GAMBLING DEBT. I'VE  
BEEN USING THE HOTEL'S MONEY  
FOR GAMBLING!

THEN I SAW THE  
LIGHT ON IN CORA'S  
DRESSING ROOM, I  
KNEW SHE'D OVER-  
HEARD ME, AND  
I HAD TO  
GET RID OF  
HER.

NOW I SEE.... BUT ONE THING  
IS WRONG HERE, CREEGAR....

I WASN'T IN MY ROOM  
THAT NIGHT.... I  
REMEMBER, I'D JUST  
LEFT THE LIGHT  
ON BY MISTAKE!

NO.... NO....! BUT  
WHEN I SAW THE  
LIGHT.... I....  
THOUGHT....  
OH, NO!

AND SO LATER.... CREEGAR BEHIND  
PRISON BARS....

THANKS AGAIN,  
RANGER.... FOR  
EVERYTHING, PLEASE  
VISIT ME OFTEN....  
I'LL BE SINGING  
EVERY NIGHT  
AGAIN  
NOW!

I'LL BE BACK SOME-  
TIME, CORA. TILL  
THEN....  
GOOD-  
BYE!



# KIT WEST and the PRINCE OF PIONEERS

WHAT IS THE QUIRK IN MEN THAT THEY WILL HATE WHAT IS FOREIGN TO THEM? EVEN ON THE BLAZING FRONTIER WHERE THE HAND OF EVERY MAN IS NEEDED TO BATTLE NATURE AND THE CRUEL SAVAGES OF THE WILDERNESS, PREJUDICE REARS ITS UGLY HEAD TO BREED A HORRIFYING TRAGEDY!



LEXINGTON, KENTUCKY, WHEN THE WEST WAS YOUNG, AND THE ONLY TRAINS WERE WAGON TRAINS...

NICE LITTLE BURG, LEXINGTON - SHAME T'LEAVE IT JUST WHEN WE WAS GETTIN' ACQUAINTED.

WE DIDN'T COME FOR A GOOD TIME, HANK, WE'VE GOT TO GET THIS WAGON SAFE TO THE MISSOURI SETTLEMENTS!



VLADIMIR! - STOP THE TRAIN!

ER - THE WHOLE TRAIN, SIR?

KIT! GIT A LOAD OF THET!







IN THE NAME OF  
HIS HIGHNESS,  
PRINCE RUDOLPH  
OF MORDAVIA,  
I COMMAND YOU  
TO STOP!

W-WHAT? I'LL RUN  
THAT PIP SQUEAK  
DOWN!

JUST A  
MINUTE,  
HANK.



HIS HIGHNESS DEMANDS  
AN AUDIENCE WITH  
THE OFFICER IN  
COMMAND.

THAT'S ME! TELL HIM  
TO COME OVER, BUT  
FAST! WE'RE IN A  
HURRY!



A MERE SLIP OF A  
GIRL GIVING ME  
ORDERS? TELL HER  
TO COME HERE,  
VLADIMIR, I GROW  
IMPATIENT!

ER-COMMON  
PEOPLE USUALLY  
APPROACH THE  
PRINCE, MISS.



THAT'S A BAD HABIT. KINGS  
AND COBBLETS ARE EQUAL IN  
AMERICA! GET TO THE  
POINT, PRINCE -- IF YOU  
ARE A PRINCE!



I WISH TO HELP FIGHT  
INDIANS, SO I WILL  
TAKE OVER COMMAND  
OF THIS BAND OF  
ROGUES AT ONCE!



WE CAN USE YOUR HELP,  
PRINCE-BUT ONLY AS A RIFLE-  
MAN. I'M IN CHARGE HERE  
BECAUSE OF MY EXPERIENCE.

THE PRINCE OF  
MORDAVIA--THE  
GREATEST MILITARY  
MIND IN EUROPE--  
A COMMON  
FOOT SOLDIER?



RIFLEMAN OR NOTHING  
PRINCE! **GIDDAP!**

YOU DROPPED  
YOUR CROWN,  
YOUR HIGHNESS!  
**HAW! HAW!**



LET THEM GO, SIR. AMERICANS WILL NEVER UNDERSTAND YOU. BETTER WE GO BACK TO MORDAVIA.

NO-I CAN NEVER GO BACK, SO-I SHALL BECOME A COMMON RIFLEMAN-COME, VLADIMIR!



DAYS PASS, FULL OF STRAIN AND TENSION...

I MUST HAVE A FORK AND KNIFE! I CANNOT EAT LIKE THESE PIGS!

THE FRONTIER ISN'T A PALACE, PRINCE. YOU'LL HAVE TO FOREGO MANY COMFORTS.

AYE, THE WILDERNESS IS FOR MEN, NOT OVERDRESSED SISSIES!



DAYS LATER

THIS IS THE FIFTH WAGON TO BREAK DOWN IN TWO DAYS. THAT AXLE LOOKS DELIBERATELY BROKEN!

YOU'RE IMAGINING THINGS, TOM. GET THE CARPENTERS.



A DAY WILL COME! I WILL HAVE MY REVENGE, AMERICAN SWINE...

SWINE? I'M GOIN' TO POKE HIS TEETH OUT, PRINCE OR NO PRINCE!

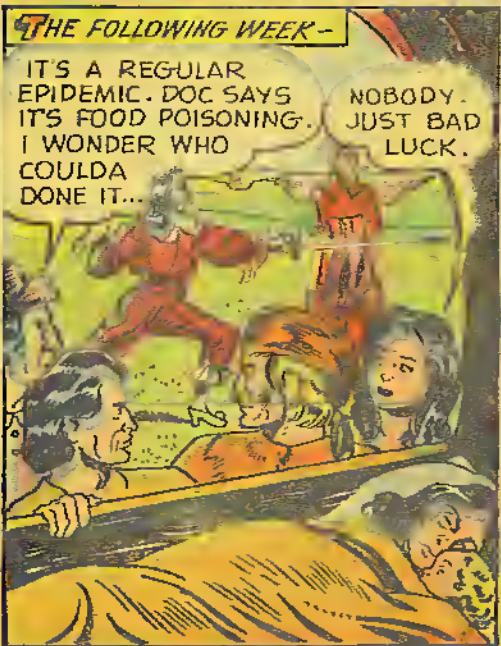
NO, HANK-HIS HIGHNESS IS UNDERGOING ADJUSTMENT.



THE FOLLOWING WEEK-

IT'S A REGULAR EPIDEMIC. DOC SAYS IT'S FOOD POISONING. I WONDER WHO COULDA DONE IT...

NOBODY. JUST BAD LUCK.



I CAN'T MAKE HIM OUT, HANK. WHAT BRINGS A ROYAL PRINCE TO THE FRONTIER?

THE EVIL EYE! WHY, WE'VE HAD NUTHIN' BUT BREAKDOWN AN' SICKNESS SINCE HE JOINED US.



AN' WHO KNOWS IF HE IS A PRINCE? HOW COME A FURRINER SPEAKS PERFECT ENGLISH?

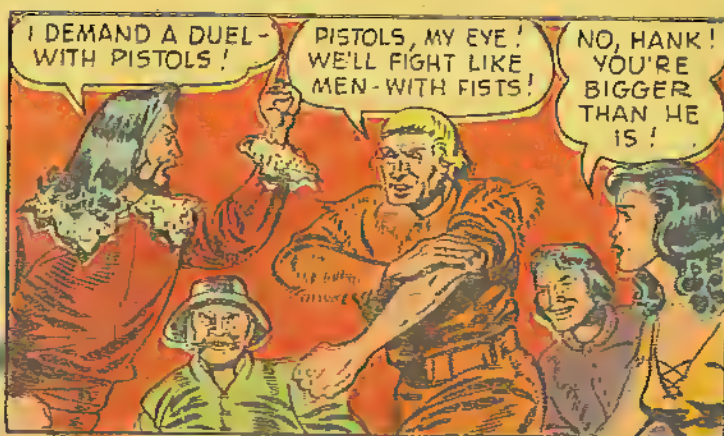
NOT ONLY ENGLISH, YOU IGNORAMUS, BUT TWENTY OTHER LANGUAGES!







WHO'S AN  
IGNOR-**WHATSIS?**



**I DEMAND A DUEL-  
WITH PISTOLS!**

**PISTOLS, MY EYE!  
WE'LL FIGHT LIKE  
MEN-WITH FISTS!**

**NO, HANK!  
YOU'RE  
BIGGER  
THAN HE  
IS!**



**I DON'T CARE!  
I'LL-UGH-H!**

**SORRY, HANK,  
YOU ASKED  
FOR IT!**



**THIS BICKERING  
AND BAITING  
MUST STOP!  
WE'RE NOW  
ENTERING INJUN  
TERRITORY: FIGHTS  
AMONG OURSELVES  
ARE FATAL!**

**THEN  
GET RID  
O' THET  
FAKE  
PRINCE!  
MEBBE  
HE'S AN  
INJUN SPY  
TOO!**



**THAT NIGHT...**

**FOR YOUR SAKE, PRINCE,  
GO HOME TO MORDAVIA.  
THE MEN THINK YOU'RE  
A JINX-- IF WE HAVE ANY  
TROUBLE WITH CHIEF  
TOSHUNTO,  
YOU'LL BE  
BLAMED!**

**I CAN  
NEVER GO  
'BACK, MISS  
WEST. YEARS  
AGO, IN  
MORDAVIA,  
I HAD A BAD  
REPUTATION  
FOR WINE,  
WOMEN AND  
DUELLING.**



**THEN I MET ELENA, PRINCESS OF  
BOHEMIA. I LOVED HER BUT HER BROTHER  
OBJECTED TO OUR MARRIAGE. HE  
CHALLENGED ME TO A DUEL...**

**N-NO. ONE OF YOU  
MAY BE KILLED!**

**YES, AND IT WILL BE  
THIS WORTHLESS  
SCOUNDREL!**

**MY SECONDS  
WILL CALL  
UPON YOURS THIS  
AFTERNOON...**



**-I GAVE ELENA MY WORD I WOULD FIRE IN  
THE AIR, BUT MY PISTOL WENT OFF PRE-  
MATURELY. ELENA'S BROTHER WAS KILLED!**

**B-BUT I SWEAR, ELENA-  
IT WAS AN ACCIDENT...**

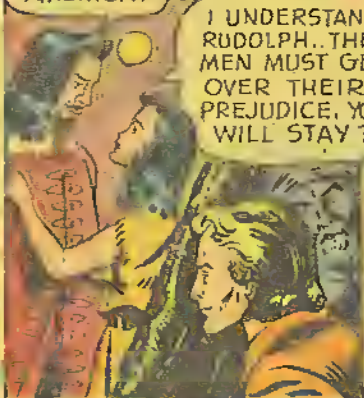
**LIAR! YOU  
MURDERED  
MY BROTHER!**



"THAT NIGHT, OVERCOME WITH GRIEF, ELENA LEAPED TO HER DEATH FROM THE CASTLE WALL."



TO ME, EUROPE WAS ELENA. WITH HER GONE, I CAN NEVER RETURN. WITH MY FAITHFUL SERVANT, VLADIMIR, I CAME HERE TO BE OF SERVICE TO AMERICA.



I UNDERSTAND, RUDOLPH... THE MEN MUST GET OVER THEIR PREJUDICE, YOU WILL STAY?

AH, BUT MR. JINY HAS A SLICK TONGUE! KIT SWALLOWED THE WHOLE FAIRY-TALE!

BAH! THE SNEAKIN' RENEGADE! HE'D BETTER BRING NO MORE BAD LUCK TO THIS WAGON TRAIN.



NEXT DAY -- A SCOUTING PARTY, OPERATING A MILE AHEAD...



TWO HOURS LATER-

DEAD! EVERY BLAMED ONE OF THEM!

WHERE WERE YOU, MR. PRINCE? I SEEN YOU LEAVE THE TRAIN EARLY THIS MORNIN'... MAYBE TO WARN YOUR INJUN FRIENDS?



STOP THOSE ACCUSATIONS! HANK RAN INTO AN AMBUSH! WE'VE JUST GOT TO BE MORE CAREFUL!

BAH. LOOKIT HIM SMILE. ENJOYIN' TH WOOL YOU'VE PULLED OVER HER EYES, EH?



BUT THE BAD LUCK CONTINUED. THE SUCCESS OF TOSHUNTO'S SNIPERS WAS PHENOMENAL...

INJUNS!



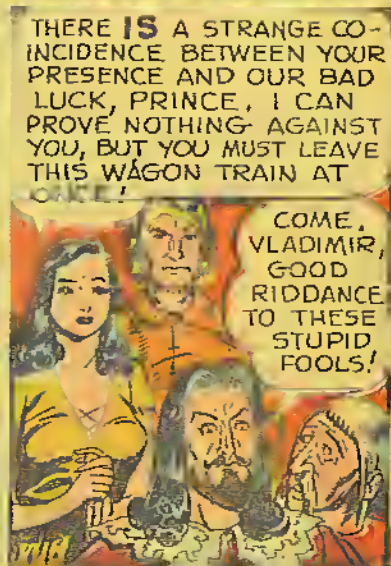
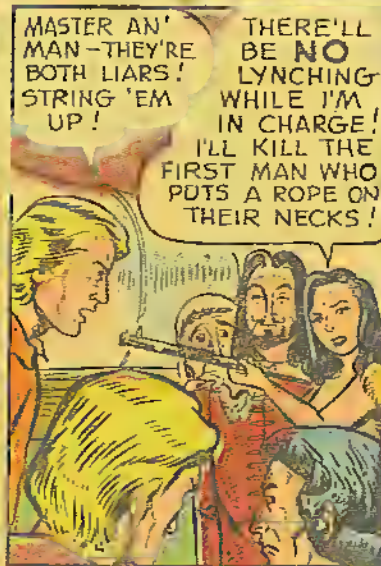
AMBUSHES MULTIPLIED...

YOU WERE ONE OF THIS PARTY. HOW'D YOU MANAGE TO ESCAPE?

THEY SENT ME AWAY, POOR FELLOWS. THEY SAID I'D JINX THEM.









LET ME  
AT THE  
SCALPIN'  
WRETCH!

NO, BEN--HE'S  
TOSHUNTO'S SON!  
WE CAN THREATEN  
TO KILL HIM  
UNLESS TOSHUNTO  
GIVES UP HIS RAIDS!

SEE, KIT? HOW OUR  
LUCK CHANGED SINCE  
THAT FAKE PRINCE  
LEFT CAMP?

I'VE A PLAN, VLADIMIR...  
I'M GOING TO FREE  
TOSHUNTO'S SON. THEN YOU  
WILL TAKE A MESSAGE TO  
KIT WEST.



I AM FRIEND OF  
INDIAN. TAKE  
ME TO TOSHUNTO.  
I HAVE PLAN TO  
KILL ALL WHITE  
MEN. I HATE  
WHITE MEN!

YES, YOU  
FREE  
CHIEF'S  
SON,  
YOU  
MUST BE  
FRIEND.

AN  
HOUR  
LATER

THEN THE  
PRINCE SOCKED  
ME, WHEN I  
WOKE UP, THE  
INJUN WAS GONE.

THE  
PRINCE'S  
SERVANT!  
KILL  
THE...!

D-OON'T  
SHOOT!  
I HAVE A  
MESSAGE!

THE PRINCE! YOU--  
ARRGHH!



THE PRINCE IS HEARTBROKEN  
THAT YOU DO NOT BELIEVE HE  
WANTS TO HELP AMERICA.  
HE SAVED TOSHUNTO'S SON  
TO MAKE TOSHUNTO  
BELIEVE HE IS INJUN'S  
FRIEND... ONLY TO LEAD

THEM INTO AN AMBUSH  
TOMORROW AT  
DAWN AT SILENT  
CREEK.

HE'S LYIN'!  
HANG HIM!!

NO, I'VE GOT A BETTER  
PLAN--WE'LL GET TO  
SILENT CREEK BEFORE  
DAWN. WE'LL SEE  
WHO WALKS INTO AN  
AMBUSH, TOSHUNTO  
OR US! MEANWHILE,  
HOLD VLADIMIR  
PRISONER!

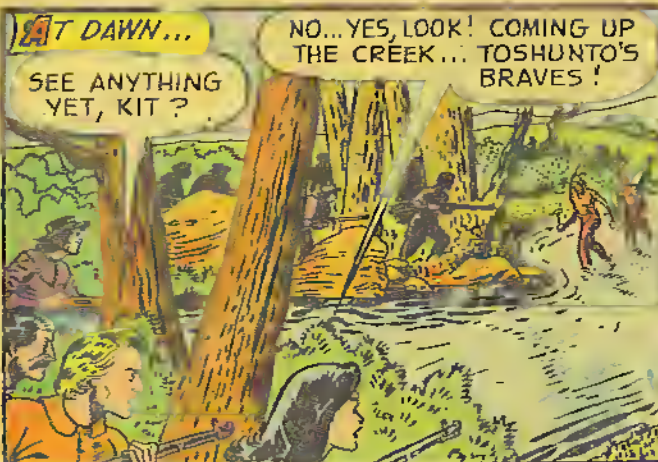
AT THAT TIME, AT  
TOSHUNTO'S CAMP...

...WE GO, BUT WE MAKE  
SURE YOU NO TRICK US.  
WE TIE YOU TO STAKE,  
IF WHITES AMBUSH US,  
MY BRAVES BURN YOU  
TO DEATH--  
UNDERSTAND?

(GULP!)  
U-UNDER-  
STAND !!!







AT DAWN...

SEE ANYTHING  
YET, KIT?

NO... YES, LOOK! COMING UP  
THE CREEK... TOSHUNTO'S  
BRAVES!



ALL--!!

TOGETHER,  
NOW--FIRE!



THE WHITE DEVIL TRICKED  
US! SEND BACK WORD--HE  
DIES!!

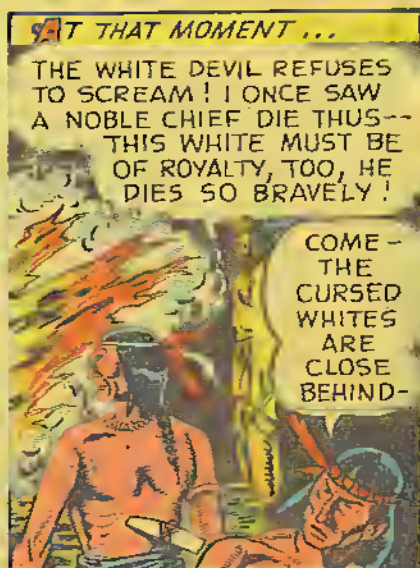
YES,  
TOSHUNTO!



WHAT A LICKING!  
THEY NEVER HAD  
A CHANCE!

THANKS TO  
THE PRINCE! WE  
HAD HIM ALL WRONG  
VLADIMIR!

YES-- BUT  
NOW THEY  
KILL HIM!  
(SOB!)



AT THAT MOMENT...

THE WHITE DEVIL REFUSES  
TO SCREAM! I ONCE SAW  
A NOBLE CHIEF DIE THUS--  
THIS WHITE MUST BE  
OF ROYALTY, TOO, HE  
DIES SO BRAVELY!

COME--  
THE  
CURSED  
WHITES  
ARE  
CLOSE  
BEHIND--



SHORTLY AFTER... A SAD  
SIGHT...

HE SUFFERED  
AGONIES FOR US,  
AND WE DIDN'T  
BELIEVE HIM!

(SOB!)  
M-MASTER!!

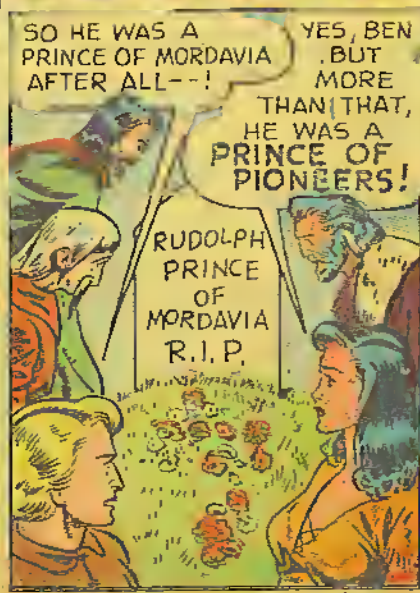


THREE MONTHS LATER  
AT THE MISSOURI  
SETTLEMENTS...

SOME PEOPLE TO  
SEE YOU, KIT. DIPLOMATS,  
THEY SAID.

VLADIMIR!  
AT LAST WE  
HAVE FOUND  
YOU!

OH, YOUR  
HIGHNESS--  
YOUR  
BROTHER  
IS DEAD!



SO HE WAS A  
PRINCE OF MORDAVIA  
AFTER ALL--!

YES, BEN  
BUT  
MORE

THAN THAT,  
HE WAS A  
PRINCE OF  
PIONEERS!

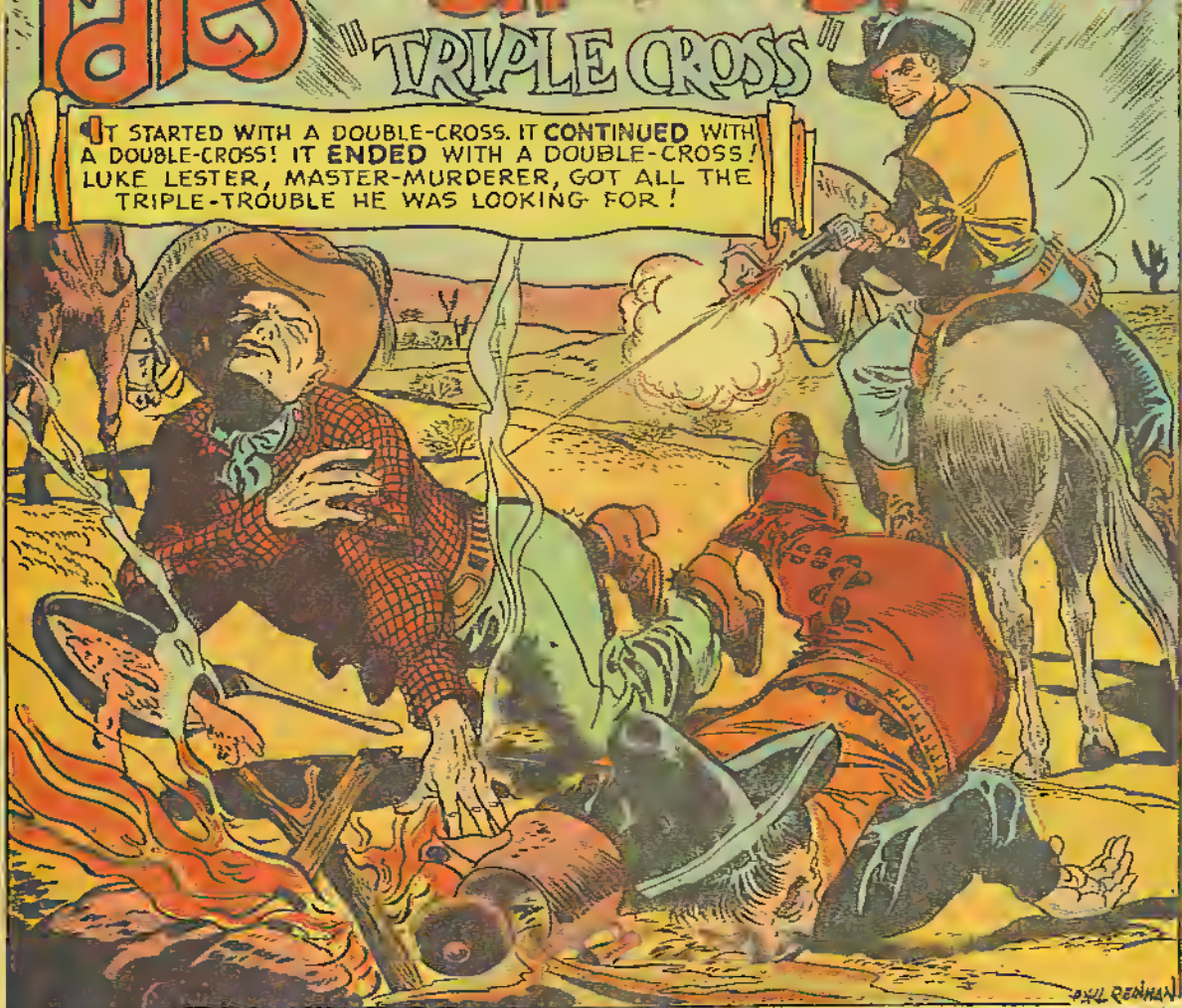
RUDOLPH  
PRINCE  
OF  
MORDAVIA  
R.I.P.



# Tales of the Silent Spaces

## "TRIPLE CROSS"

IT STARTED WITH A DOUBLE-CROSS. IT CONTINUED WITH A DOUBLE-CROSS! IT ENDED WITH A DOUBLE-CROSS! LUKE LESTER, MASTER-MURDERER, GOT ALL THE TRIPLE-TROUBLE HE WAS LOOKING FOR!



JOEL REEDMAN

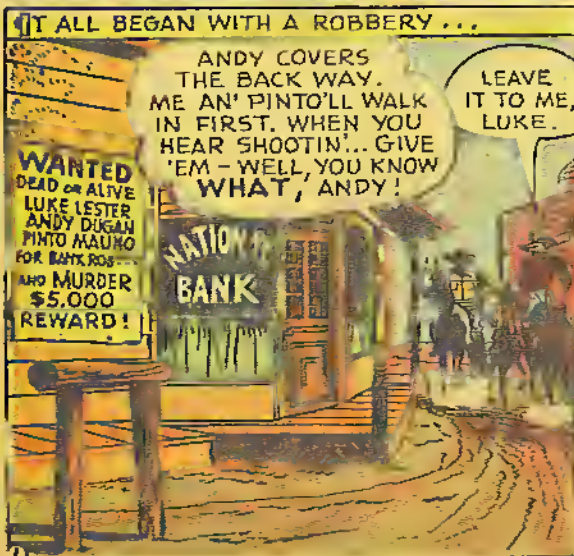
IT ALL BEGAN WITH A ROBBERY...

ANDY COVERS THE BACK WAY. ME AN' PINTO'LL WALK IN FIRST. WHEN YOU HEAR SHOOTIN'... GIVE 'EM - WELL, YOU KNOW WHAT, ANDY!

LEAVE IT TO ME, LUKE.

**WANTED**  
DEAD OR ALIVE  
LUKE LESTER  
ANDY DUGAN  
PINTO MAURO  
FOR BANK ROB  
AND MURDER  
\$5,000  
REWARD!

**NATIONAL BANK**



OKAY, PINTO. LET'S GO, SHOOT FIRST, ASK QUESTIONS SECOND.

WHY NOT? THEY GOT ENOUGH PINNED ONTO US TO STRETCH OUR NECKS TEN TIMES OVER!

**BANK**











LET'S STOP, LUKE. THE HOSSES ARE GETTIN' AWFUL LATHERED UP. BESIDES - I'M GETTIN' HONGRY.

THEY POSSE MUST BE 'WAY BEHIND. WE CAN STOP A WHILE.

OKAY. HOW 'BOUT HERE?



AIN'T YUH GETTIN' OFF, LUKE?

IN A MINUTE. YUH GUYS GIT, SUPPER GOIN'!

THEY GIT IT THE SECOND THEY TURN THEIR BACKS...



BANG! BANG!

ARRGH-H!



L-LUKE! ...YUH... (GASP!) GONE LOCO?

LOCO AS A FOX!

BANG! BANG!



DIRTY \*&@! DOUBLE-CROSSER! OH-H-H-H...

FIRST STOP, FEATHER CITY... AN' GOOD-OLE LOLA-



MIDNIGHT. FEATHER CITY-- A TOWN THAT KNEW NO CURFEW...

HERE Y'ARE, BOY! QUIET NOW, WHILE I GO SEE MY OLD FLAME, LOLA, AN' MAYBE CATCH FORTY WINKS...



THERE MUST BE A REWARD OUT FOR MY HAIR AS BIG AS THIS TAKE, ALMOST. BUT LOLA WAS ALWAYS SWEET ON ME. SHE'LL HELP POPPA WHEN HE'S ON THE LAM...



OH, I KNEW YOU'D COME! I HEARD ALL ABOUT IT! YOU'RE IN AWFUL TROUBLE!

I KNOW, BABY, - THAT'S WHY YOU'VE GOT TO HELP ME. I'M PLUMB POOPED. I'VE GOT TO REST A SPELL OR I'LL DROP





PINTO AN' ANDY...  
THEY WEREN'T SO  
LUCKY. THEY CAUGHT  
IT FROM THE  
POSSE.

YOU'RE  
LYIN',  
LUKE.  
THE PAPERS  
SAY ALL THREE  
OF YOU  
ESCAPED!



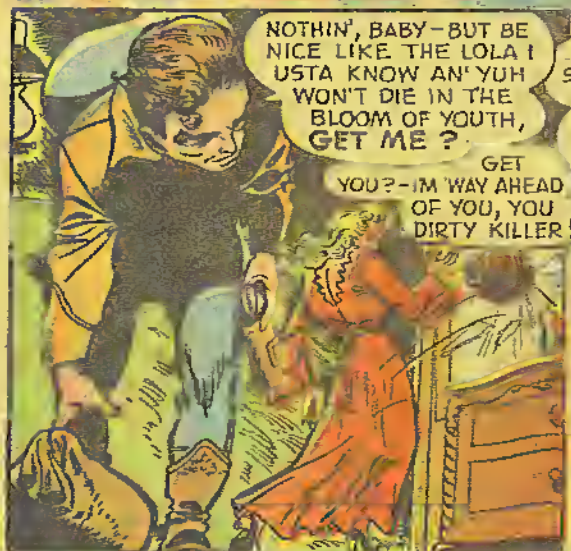
THAT \$50,000. WAS THE  
CHANCE OF A LIFETIME FOR  
BOTH OF US, LOLA. I'M SENDIN'  
FOR YUH ONCE I MAKE MEXICO,  
\$50,000. SPLIT THREE WAYS  
AIN'T MUCH - SO I LET PINTO  
AN' ANDY  
HAVE IT.

(GASP!)  
YOU MURDERED  
THEM IN COLD  
BLOOD?! PINTO,  
WHO'D HAVE DIED  
FOR YOU...  
AND ANDY!



I DON'T LIKE THE WAY  
YOU'RE KICKIN' UP A FUSS  
'BOUT BEAT-UP POLECATS  
WHO ALWAYS TOOK THEIR  
CUES FROM ME!

I'M THINKING,  
LUKE - WHAT'S  
TO STOP A  
SMART GUY LIKE  
YOU FROM  
GETTING  
RID OF  
ME?



NOTHIN', BABY - BUT BE  
NICE LIKE THE LOLA I  
USTA KNOW AN' YUH  
WON'T DIE IN THE  
BLOOM OF YOUTH,  
GET ME?

GET  
YOU? - I'M WAY AHEAD  
OF YOU, YOU  
DIRTY KILLER!



YOU  
SPITTIN', SCREECHIN'  
SHE-TIGER!  
YUH  
DOUBLE-  
CROSSED  
ME!

SHERIFF, HE'S UP HERE! LUKE LESTER!  
HE'S... MPPPHHH!

SHERIFF!  
LOOK!



THEY'RE COMIN' DOWN THE  
BACK STAIRS! BUT LESTER'S  
USIN' LOLA LAMAR  
FOR A SHIELD!

SHE GETS  
IT, IF YOU  
BAT AN  
EYELASH!

HE  
MURDERED  
PINTO AND  
ANDY!  
SHOOT!  
SHOOT!



CAIN'T, MISS,  
WE'D HIT YOU.  
WE'LL CATCH  
LUKE, ALL RIGHT.  
HE CAINT GET  
FAR... HE'S  
GOT TO CROSS  
THE DESERT...

SMART BOY!  
THE SHERIFF  
LIKES TO  
PROTECT THE  
LADIES, EH?



WELL, PROTECT  
HER NOW - HA, HA!  
GIDAP, YA SON  
OF SATAN!

OH!!  
BANG!  
BANG!



SHE'S DEAD! AIN'T THERE **NOTHIN'** SACRED TO THET COYOTE?

**NOTHIN' BUT HIS GREED FOR GOLD, ROUND UP EVERY GUN-SLINGER IN TOWN! THET TRIGGER-MAD SKUNK WON'T HAVE MUCH CHANCE OF GITTIN' AWAY.**



**FOUR MISERABLE, AGONIZING HOURS LATER...**

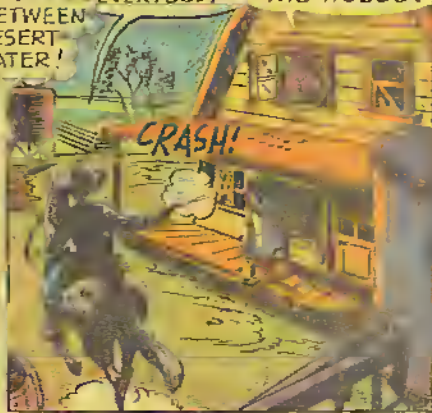
**STARTIN' TO GIT SANDY ALREADY—I MUST BE GITTIN' CLOSE TO UNCLE WILLIE'S FARM... THE LAST STOP BETWEEN THE DESERT AN' WATER!**



**AS DAWN BURSTS RED OVER THE EDGE OF THE DESERT...**

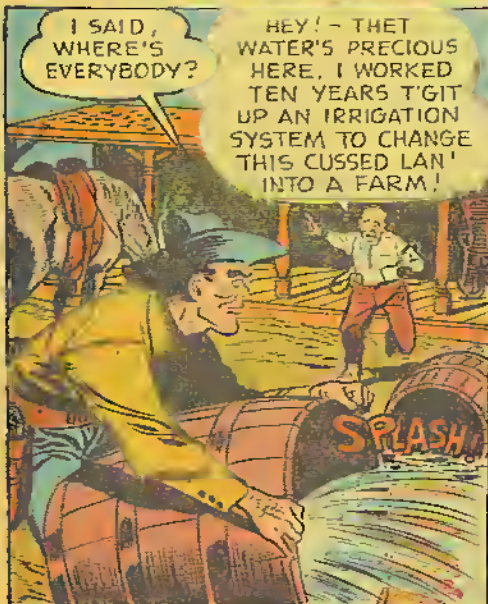
**HEY, THERE, UNCLE WILLIE! C'MON OUT! WHERE'S EVERYBODY?**

**BE THET YUH, LUKE? WHAT'IN TARNATION BE YUH DOIN' IN THIS NECK OF THE WOODS?**



**I SAID, WHERE'S EVERYBODY?**

**HEY!—THET WATER'S PRECIOUS HERE. I WORKED TEN YEARS T'GIT UP AN IRRIGATION SYSTEM TO CHANGE THIS CUSSED LAN' INTO A FARM!**



**THET'S TOO BAD, UNCLE WILLIE. YER ABOUT TO LOSE THEM TEN YEARS. YUH STILL DIDN'T SAY WHERE EVERYBODY IS!**

**THEY ALL WENT TO THE FAIR AT SHOTGUN—STOP THET HACKIN', LUKE! WITHOUT THET WATER THIS FARM'D DRY UP LIKE A PRUNE, GIVE US THET AXE!**

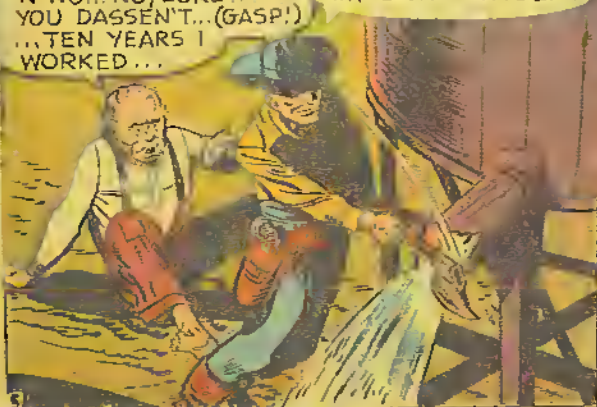


**Y DON'T UNDERSTAND, UNCLE WILLIE, THERE'S A POSSE THAT'LL BE COUNTIN' ON GITTIN' WATER TO GIT ACROSS THET DESERT AFTER ME...**



**WELL, THEY WON'T GIT A SWALLOW!—I'M A-BUSTIN' EVERY TANK AN' BARREL ON THIS FARM. I'M JUST LEAVIN' ENOUGH IN THE KITCHEN TO FILL UP MY OWN CANTEEN!**

**N-NO... NO, LUKE... YOU DASSEN'T...(GASP!) ...TEN YEARS I WORKED...**



**TOO BAD, OLD RAT! TOO BAD! GIT INSIDE AN' FILL THIS CANTEEN WHILE I BUST UP THE REST OF YORE IRRIGATION WHATEVER—YUH CALL-IT! GIT GOIN'!**





NO MAN CAN MAKE MORE'N FIVE MILES  
ACROSS THE DESERT WITHOUT DYIN' O'  
THIRST. I ONCE WATCHED A GREASER  
GO MAD-- HE STARTED SCREAMIN'  
LIKE A CHICKEN WITHOUT HIS HAID.  
HEH-HEH- THEN HE SAW RAIN...  
RAIN THAT WASN'T THERE!  
I'LL FIX THET POSSE!



I WON'T. THOUGHT  
I WOULDN'T TEST  
WHETHER YUH FILLED  
IT, EH? YORE SMART,  
UNCLE WILLIE! YUH  
BETTER NOT TRY  
TO DOUBLE-CROSS  
YORE FAVORITE  
NEPHEW, HEH-HEH.



TELL THET POSSE  
I'LL BE THINKIN' OF  
'EM WHILE I'M  
GUZZLING TEQUILA  
AN' DANCIN'  
RHUMBAS IN MEXICO.  
ADIOS, SUCKER! TEN  
YEARS! - HA, HA!



SLUP-  
SLUP!

DIRTY,  
DOUBLE-  
CROSSIN'  
VARMINT...

THREE HOURS LATER...

NOT A DROP ON  
THE FARM,  
SHERIFF, THET  
SNAKE-IN-THE-  
GRASS GOT AWAY  
LIKE HE SAID

NO. LUKE WON'T  
GIT AWAY, SHERIFF.  
HE'LL REMEMBER  
HIS UNCLE WILLIE -  
LEASTWAYS, BEFORE  
HE GOES MAD!



MEANWHILE, ON THE  
BAKING DESERT...

CAIN'T GO MUCH FURTHER...  
HORSE DAID...(GASP!)...  
N-NO REST... I GOTTA TAKE  
A DRINK...OR I... I'LL DROP!  
-AH!!  
NICE COOL  
WATER -



UGHHH! -  
(GASP!)...  
T-THIS  
AIN'T  
WATER!



SPPTTT!  
IT'S  
L-LIQUID  
AMMONIA!  
UNCLE  
WILLIE  
DOUBLE-  
CROSSED  
ME !!

A HALF HOUR LATER...

HA-HA-HA!  
(GASP!) I... I'LL  
FOOL YUH, UNCLE  
WILLIE... NO  
VULTURES  
WILL GET  
LUKE  
LOSTER!



I MADE IT  
RAIN! RAIN!  
HA-HA-HA-HA!  
(SOB!)... (SOB!)...  
SEE ALL THE  
PRETTY RAIN!  
GOLDEN RAIN!



-- AND FEASTED,  
UNMINDFUL OF THE  
GREAT TREASURE  
WHICH CAUSED  
LUKE LESTER'S  
**TRIPLE CROSS**



BUT THE VULTURES SLANTED DOWN  
THROUGH THE "GOLDEN RAIN"...



# SHARP AND FLAT

"SWING YOUR PARTNER" <sup>in</sup>

IN THE OLD WEST THERE WERE NO RADIOS AND NO JUKE BOXES, BUT THE FOLKS LIKED NOTHING BETTER THAN A GOOD EVENING OF MUSIC AND DANCING AND AROUND HIGH HOLLOW THEY KNEW WHOM TO CALL ON FOR THE MUSIC. IT WAS THOSE TWO WANDERING MUSICIANS, THOSE MUSIC-MAKERS OF THE OLD WEST-- SHARP AND FLAT--AND SOMETIMES THEY PROVIDED MORE THAN JUST COUNTRY MUSIC!



ONE DAY, AT A COLONY OF NEW SETTLERS JUST OUTSIDE OF TOWN--

HERE WE ARE, FLAT. LOOKS MIGHTY QUIET FOR A NEW SETTLEMENT.

SURE DOES, SHARP. WE OUGHTA BE ABLE TO PICK UP A JOB OR TWO HERE. THEY COULD STAND SOME MUSIC. LET'S ASK THAT FELLER.



SAY, PARDNER, HOW ABOUT SOME REAL HOE-DOWN MUSIC AROUND HERE?

YEP--WE PLAY A MEAN SQUARE-DANCE. MEBBE YOU HEARD OF US--SHARP AND FLAT.

HOPE, NEVER DID! AND NOBODY WANTS ANY MUSIC 'ROUND HERE! NO SIR!





SEE--WE'RE A-MOVIN'!  
WE BOUGHT THIS LAND  
BACK EAST FROM THE  
AJAX LAND COMPANY  
BUT IT'S JINXED!  
WE'RE PULLIN' OUT.

BUT THAT'S A TOTAL  
LOSS--YOU'LL LOSE ALL  
YOU PAID FOR IT.



SUDDENLY--

CARSON--YOU  
HERE?

YEP, I'M  
BUYIN' THIS  
JINXED LAND  
OFF THESE  
FOLKS FOR HALF  
PRICE...HELPIN'  
'EM OUT.

THAT'S RIGHT,  
MR. CARSON,  
HERE, IS REAL  
GENEROUS,  
GIVIN' US  
HALF WHAT  
WE PAID  
AJAX FOR  
BAD LAND.



WHY DO YOU  
SAY THE LAND'S  
JINXED?

SON, WHEN CATTLE DIE LIKE  
FLIES AND FOLKS TURN SICK,  
FER NO GOOD REASON--THAT  
LAND'S JINXED. THAT AJAX  
OUTFIT SOLD US BAD  
LAND, THAT'S ALL!



I'M GLAD TO DO THIS FOR  
YOU GOOD PEOPLE. I'M  
BIG-HEARTED THAT WAY,  
REMEMBER, YA'LL ALL  
BE AT MY FAREWELL  
PARTY FOR YA  
TONIGHT.

WE'RE MIGHTY GRATEFUL,  
MR. CARSON--GETTIN' HALF  
OUR MONEY BACK IS  
BETTER'N NOTHIN'!



LET'S GO, FLAT. NO  
MUSIC WANTED HERE  
WHEN DID THAT BLOW-  
HARD, CARSON, GET  
SO GENEROUS?

SEARCH ME!  
I NEVER THOUGHT HE'D  
DO ANYONE A KIND TURN.  
ESPECIALLY WITH  
MONEY INVOLVED.  
BUT HE'S DOIN' IT!



HIM AN' HIS PARTIES!  
HE HIRES US FOR NEARLY  
NOTHIN' AND MAKES US  
PLAY TILL WE DROP.

YOU'RE RIGHT, SHARP,  
BUT IT'S BETTER THAN  
NO WORK AT ALL!





UH-SHARP,  
DON'T GET MAD,  
BUT I SAW THIS  
BIRD CARSON  
BEFORE. I  
AGREED WE'D  
PLAY AT THE  
PARTY HE'S  
THROWIN'  
TONIGHT.

AW, FLAT--  
I TOLDJA NOT  
TO TAKE ANY  
ANYMORE  
JOBS FROM  
HIM! SHUCKS!  
NOW WE'LL HAVE  
TO GO  
THROUGH WIT  
IT. C'MON--  
LET'S GET  
BACK!

AND SO, THAT NIGHT--  
SWING YOUR PARTNER,  
ONE-TWO-THREE--  
TURN TO THE  
LEFT AN' THERE  
SHE'LL BE --

PSST--  
HARP, HERE  
COMES  
CARSON  
AGAIN!

LOUDER--PLAY  
LOUDER, YA HEAR?  
WADDAYA THINK  
I'M PAYIN' YA FOR?  
LOUDER AND  
FASTER!

YES, SIR,  
WE'LL TRY!



C'MON  
FOLKS!  
HAVE A  
GOOD  
TIME!  
IT'S ALL  
ON ME,  
Y'KNOW!

THE SKINFINT!  
WONDER WHERE  
HE GETS HIS  
MONEY... BUYIN'  
LAND AT  
HALF-PRICE

TH' MORE  
I THINK  
OF IT, THE  
LESS IT  
SEEMS LIKE  
HIM-HELPIN'  
THOSE  
SETTLERS

OUT SO THEY  
ONLY LOSE  
HALF THEIR  
MONEY.

IT BEATS  
ME TOO.  
CARSON  
NEVER DID  
ANYTHING  
NICE FOR,  
ANYBODY

TO GET MY  
MEGAPHONE  
FOR THE  
REEL. IT'S  
IN THE  
BACK. KEEP  
PLAYIN'!

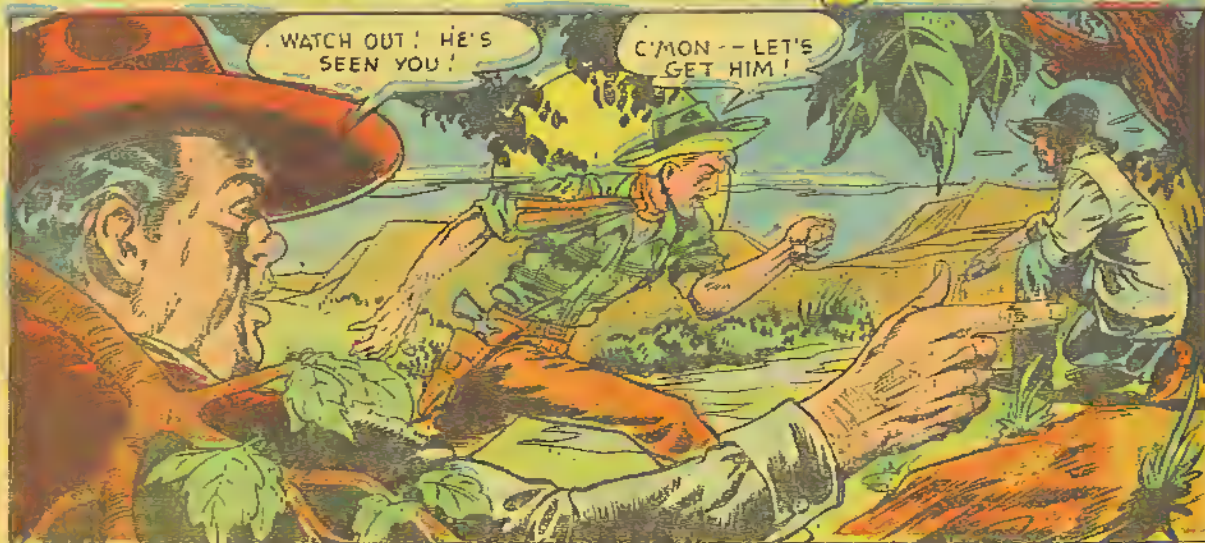
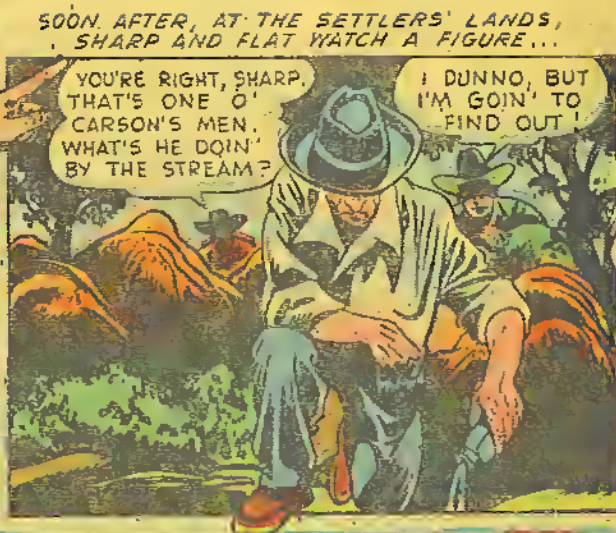
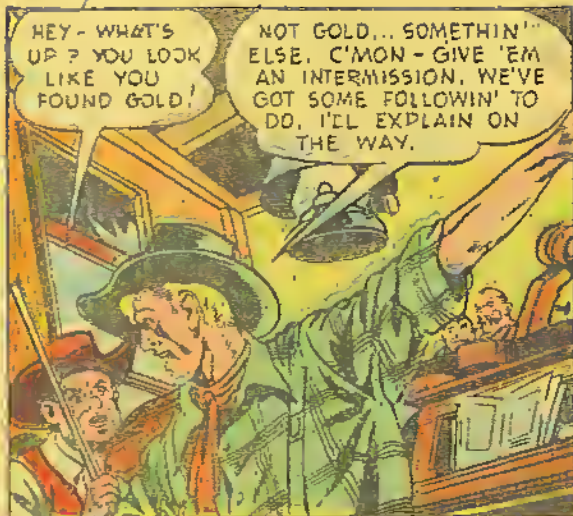
HERE  
IT IS -  
HEY,  
THAT'S  
CARSON'S  
VOICE!

THEM  
SETTLERS  
ARE ALL  
WILLIN'  
TO SELL  
BOSS. ONLY  
A FEW  
ARE HOLDIN'

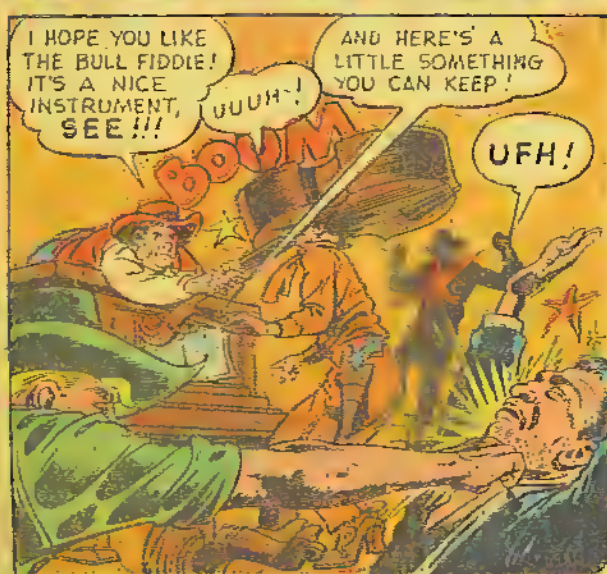
YOU BETTER  
GET OUT THE  
NOW. TAKE  
MORE ARSEN  
YOU KNOW  
WHAT TO  
CONVINCE  
THEM THAT  
THEY'RE  
JINXED!









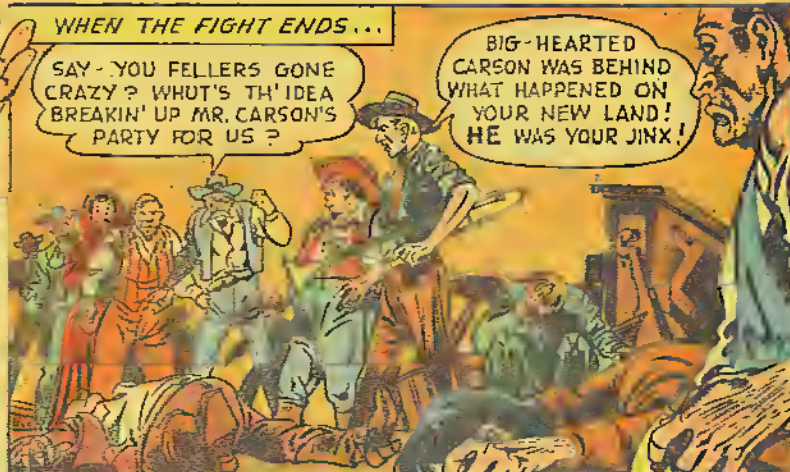






THIS IS A  
NEW WAY  
TO PLAY  
THE SLIDE  
TROMBONE!

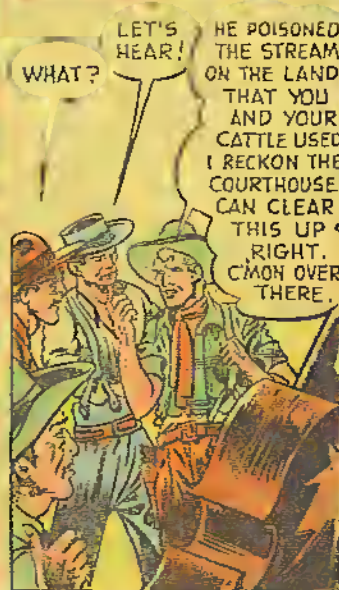
OWOOO!



WHEN THE FIGHT ENDS...

SAY - YOU FELLERS GONE  
CRAZY? WHUT'S TH' IDEA  
BREAKIN' UP MR. CARSON'S  
PARTY FOR US?

BIG-HEARTED  
CARSON WAS BEHIND  
WHAT HAPPENED ON  
YOUR NEW LAND!  
HE WAS YOUR JINK!



WHAT?

LET'S  
HEAR!

HE POISONED  
THE STREAM  
ON THE LAND  
THAT YOU  
AND YOUR  
CATTLE USED  
I RECKON THE  
COURTHOUSE  
CAN CLEAR  
THIS UP  
RIGHT.  
C'MON OVER  
THERE.



AND SOON AT THE  
COURTHOUSE RECORD BOOKS...

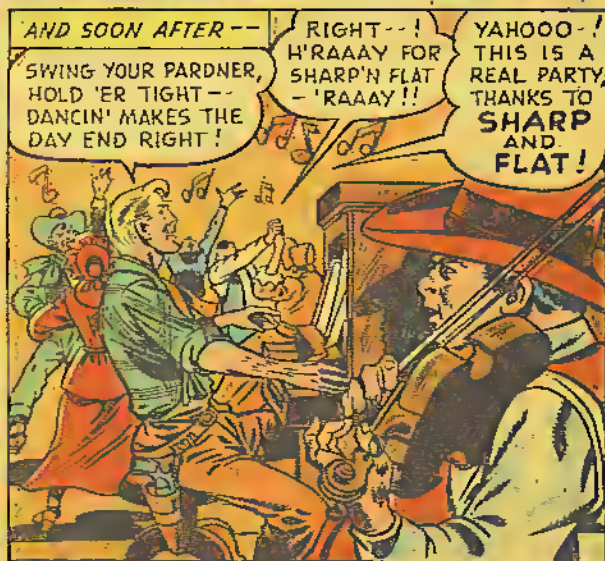
HERE IT  
IS-- AJAX  
LAND CO.,  
C. CARSON,  
OWNER.

YOU SEE - HE SOLD  
THE LAND UNDER  
THAT NAME, THEN  
WAS GETTING YOU  
TO SELL BACK AT  
HALF-PRICE.



HE INTENDED SELLING  
TO OTHER SETTLERS,  
THEN PULL THE SAME  
STUNT. IT EVEN MADE  
HIM LOOK BIG-HEARTED  
BUT HIS SCHEME IS  
DONE FOR.

WE'LL SEE HE GETS  
LOCKED UP PRONTO.  
AND WE FOLKS OWE  
YOU FELLERS A LOT.  
HOW 'BOUT FINISHIN'  
THAT PARTY  
OURSELVES.



AND SOON AFTER --  
SWING YOUR PARTNER,  
HOLD 'ER TIGHT --  
DANCIN' MAKES THE  
DAY END RIGHT!

RIGHT --!  
H'RAAAY FOR  
SHARP'N FLAT  
-- 'RAAAY!!

YAHOOO --!  
THIS IS A  
REAL PARTY.  
THANKS TO  
SHARP  
AND  
FLAT!